

Compilation of Best Practices from the 13 District Councils

This is a compilation of "Best Practices" as described by each of the Seattle City Neighborhood Council's 13 District Councils. This is a "work in progress," and additions and modifications are expected as this document evolves.

Ballard District

1. Ballard District Council holds an annual awards ceremony where local organizations, youth groups, senior groups and other participants with the District Council are commended and recognized for their contributions. This occurs as a major feature of a selected monthly meeting and is an annual and well-anticipated event.

Central District

Delridge Neighborhoods District

1. Delridge Neighborhoods District Council took a year to work through a "Visioning Delridge" exercise involving invited speakers and extended open-ended monthly meetings to come up with a series of goals and objectives which all the community groups within the District could subscribe to. This Delridge Vision is now being implemented through District Council actions. The Vision exercise produced a documented set of these goals which can now be distributed to City officials, other Districts, invited guests and posted on neighborhood blogs.

2. Delridge Neighborhoods District Council is taking a new approach to soliciting ordinary citizen input by hosting an additional meeting on the same night as the regular District Council meeting. This extra meeting occurs an hour earlier and is an open invitation to anyone living in the Delridge Neighborhoods District to come and express themselves - with new ideas, with concerns, with suggestions, with complaints, or simply with discussion on common or unique issues. This has proven valuable in bringing new faces to the District Council meetings and in putting those interested in particular projects or issues in touch with others who are also working that same item.

3. Delridge Neighborhoods District Council has been extremely active with working with Seattle Police Department, Seattle Planning and Development Department, Seattle City Council and other Seattle government units in applying pressure to absentee property owners to clean up or maintain their property and was instrumental in applying pressure to have City Departments using their legal means to fine or legally coerce these property owners into maintaining a better environment. The same approach has been taken using local resources and local volunteer labor to board and maintain "shuttered" Seattle School District property.

4. In concert with the Southwest District Council, Delridge Neighborhoods District Council has co-hosted and provided significant support and volunteer activity for the annual "Gathering of Neighbors," a community forum occupying an entire High School public space (West Seattle HS alternates with Chief Sealth International HS) as the hosting institution. This once-a-year gathering brings together practically all of the non-profit organizations within the West Seattle/Duwamish Peninsula community as well as a very broad collection of local service providers and for-profit service organizations. There are activities for all ages throughout the day and there are forums and public

interaction seminars given on a variety of topics - topical to the year during which the GON is occurring. Participation throughout the 6 years this has been occurring has grown each year and the number of residents, neighbors, youth and seniors who participate from the many communities in West Seattle has also grown substantially. This is an annual event.

Downtown District

East District

Greater Duwamish District

Lake Union District

Magnolia/Queen Anne District

North District

Northeast District

Northwest District

Southeast District

Southwest District

1. The Southwest District Council voted unanimously two years ago to review each request for a presentation to the Council from the perspective of whether or not the Department or organization wishing to present was providing useful or valuable information or using the opportunity to either push an agenda or propagandize ongoing City activities (oftentimes these projects were at odds with neighborhood plans or the general consensus of the Council). The Southwest District Council felt that their monthly meeting time had been, over time, co-opted by City and County Departments to no particular advantage overall for the District Council members. This new approach has each group wishing to make a presentation provide advance information as to the topic, the time required and, if there are existing materials, to distribute those materials in advance of the meeting to the District's membership.

2. The Southwest District Council prepared a single sheet of paper identifying the overarching issues which affect all Southwest District Council members, the common goals and objectives of each of the members, and the expectations the District Council has for visitors from other organizations or City and County Departments. This works to the advantage of all parties because it gives those making a presentation to the Southwest District Council the advantage of knowing what the Council's members are concerned about, what their aspirations and goals are, and what, if any, their experience has been with past projects and activities. This is now a standard handout for anyone making a presentation to the District Council.

3. Last year those members of the Southwest District Council which are the official keepers of Urban Village or Hub Urban Village neighborhood plans - Morgan Community Association, Junction Neighborhood Organization/West Seattle Junction Association, Admiral Neighborhood Association -

spent one monthly meeting each describing and going over the history, plans, accomplishments and evolution of each of their respective neighborhood plans. At the conclusion of the presentations, all of the members of the Southwest District Council had a much deeper understanding of each of the urban village plans and an overall understanding of the relationship of the plans to each other and to the common goals and objectives of the rest of the Council members. This was considered a useful and illuminating expenditure of community time and has resulted in a District Council which has a broad view and understanding of the plans and how they affect the District's major commercial thoroughfare - California Avenue SW - as each of the Urban Villages occupies a major section of California Ave. stretching from one end of the District to the other.

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